

CLASSIFICATION ~~RESTRICTED~~
SECURITY INFORMATION
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION FROM
FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

REPORT STAT
CD NO.

COUNTRY Rumania

SUBJECT Geographic - Terrain, climate, soil
Economic - Transportation, agriculture

HOW PUBLISHED Daily newspaper, monthly periodical

WHERE PUBLISHED Vienna, Bucharest

DATE PUBLISHED May 1953

LANGUAGE German, Rumanian

DATE OF INFORMATION 1953

DATE DIST. 23 Sep 1953

NO. OF PAGES 4

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES, WITHIN THE MEANING OF TITLE 18, SECTIONS 793 AND 794, OF THE U.S. CODE, AS AMENDED. ITS TRANSMISSION OR REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS TO OR RECEIPT BY AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW. THE REPRODUCTION OF THIS FORM IS PROHIBITED.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE Newspaper and periodical as indicated.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE DANUBE-BLACK SEA CANAL AREA

[Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.]

The idea of building a canal from the Danube to the Black Sea, to solve problems of drought and transportation, was first conceived in 1837. However, the technical knowledge of engineers in Rumania was not sufficient to undertake such a job. The Danube Commission, which regulated ship traffic on the river, showed no interest in the project. In the summer of 1949, the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers Party and the Council of Ministers drew up a plan to cut a waterway through the Carpa-Bu steppes between the Danube port of Cernavoda and the newly created Black Sea port of Midia.(1)

The Danube flows 300 kilometers from Cernavoda to Sulina. The Danube-Black Sea Canal cuts this distance to 60 kilometers and will permit steamers to go directly from Constanta to Cernavoda.(2)

The waters of the Danube carry millions of tons of silt and sand which are deposited in shallows and on sandbanks. These shallows and sandbanks, with resultant swamps, provide great hardships for ships in the delta area. Costly dredging operations have to be maintained. However, the delta has gradually silted up so that transportation is almost at a standstill. The new canal will obviate the necessity for dredging the delta of the Danube. It will cut travel distance 300 kilometers, improve transport conditions, and reduce the cost of shipping.(1)

The Danube port of Cernavoda will be dredged and will be provided with all the facilities of a maritime port.(2) The new port of Midia, on the Black Sea, will be seven times the size of Constanta, and freight-handling facilities will be many times those of the latter port.(1) Medgidia, formerly considered a place of exile, now has a central machine shop which amounts to a metallurgical factory. In addition, it has a brick works and a cement plant.(2)



STAT

CLASSIFICATION		RESTRICTED		DISTRIBUTION					
STATE	NAVY	NSRB							
ARMY	AIR	FBI							

RESTRICTED

STAT

Dobruja, the area through which the Danube-Black Sea Canal runs, is bounded on the south by the Bulgarian plateau, and on the north by the Dobrujan mountains, the oldest in Rumania. They are of the same age as the mountains of Bohemia, Crimea, Scotland, and Scandinavia. The entire Dobrujan plateau varies from 2-3 meters above sea level in some areas to 455 meters above sea level in the north.(2)

The southeast part of Rumania, which constitutes the Dobruja, is cut off from the rest of the country by the Danube. This area contains a depression, called the Cara-Su valley, where yellow-green swamps and pools are prevalent. The valley, which opens toward the south and east, has constant stormy winds, icy cold in winter and scorching hot in summer. Despite the proximity of the Danube, there are bad droughts each year. The grain dries out and the inhabitants go hungry.(1) The strongest wind to blow over this rocky soil is known as the "Black Wind." It is hot and dry; it parches the earth and burns spikes of grain in a few hours. In the winter the "Crivat," a strong cold northeast wind from the USSR, blows over the area.

The soil has a dry calcareous base. In spots, loess strata several meters thick are found. Swampy areas are covered with layers of slime. Chalk and kaolin prevail at Murfutlar, granite at Macin, and nummulitic calcareous formations at Azarlac; marble is found in Canara and Basghiol. There are many dry river beds in the Dobruja, including those of the Cara-Su, Pecineaga, Cerna, and Saraitul rivers. A thread of water still flows in many of these. Many have become stagnant swamps. However, melting snows turn them into raging torrents in the spring. Otherwise, in this arid area the only water is the Danube to the west and north, and the Black Sea to the east. Underground water flowing eastward from the Danube is found 50-80 meters below the surface. In the past, inhabitants were not able to make full use of the water supply. Small wells were overexploited, and water became subject to theft and speculation.

The Dobruja is half as densely populated as the rest of Rumania. Villages of Rumanians, Tartars, Truks, and Ukrainians are to be found. The crops and fauna differ from those found west of the Danube. The Dobruja has the Georgian turtle, the bald white steppe eagle, and a boa constrictor one tenth the size of the one found in Africa.

The characteristic grains of this region are rye and millet, which are more successful in a dry climate than corn or wheat. During some years, precipitation in the Dobruja is less than 25 millimeters; that is to say, one third the amount needed for agriculture. Two crops that flourish here, however, are rape and chick-peas. The Dobruja furnishes three quarters of the entire Rumanian rape crop and half the entire chick-pea crop.(2)

The path of the canal, which is being built to irrigate this area, leads from Cernavoda to the Midia foothills. The area may be divided into three types of relief. The first feature is the Cara-Su valley, with its numerous stagnant lakes and swamps. Here the inhabitants have to carry on a constant struggle for water. From Poarta Alba to Ovidiu the canal crosses a range of the Canari hills for more than 15 kilometers. The depth of the canal bed in this sector reaches more than 80 meters. In the third sector, the canal extends across the steep coastal slope to the sea. Sluices, emergency dams, pumping stations, etc., will be built along the canal. Ports with first-class equipment will be built at Cernavoda, Mirclavoda, Neagidia, Poarta Alba, Marsarcia, Navodar, and Midia.

One of the most important sections of the project is the Poarta Alba area, which has two connections with the sea. One is the railroad line from Constanta, the other is the canal. In this section the construction of the canal

- 2 -

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

STAT

is nearly finished. The canal headquarters and central administration will be in Poarta Alba. The small town of Poarta Alba is turning into a city with more than 20,000 inhabitants.(1) At Poarta Alba and Mazarcea, mechanical shovels and excavators are being replaced by miners because it is necessary to cut so deeply through the hills. Equipment used includes the Soviet SE 3 excavator with a 3-ton shovel, Soviet Kirov tractors, ZIS 4-5 ton cranes, Soviet drills, and electric dredges of the NZ 12 type. More than 13,000 kilograms of dynamite have been used here thus far.(2)

In Midia, warehouses, residential quarters, and two breakwaters each 7 kilometers in length will be erected.(1) Numerous roads and bridges will be built over the now roadless steppe. Water reservoirs will be built along the canal. These will contain many millions of cubic meters of water for irrigation.(1) Reservoirs with a total capacity of nearly 700,000 cubic meters will be constructed in valleys and depressions over an area of 2,500 hectares. One such reservoir is in the Cocos valley.(2) More than 100,000 hectares of ground will be improved for agricultural use. A network of canals, fed by huge pumps at the Danube, have spread Danube waters hundreds of kilometers over the Dobruja steppes.(1) State farms and collectives have irrigated 367 hectares thus far. Along the canal, experiments are being carried on with cotton, sesame, peanuts, lufa, and chick-peas.(2) To protect against the "Black Wind" and the "Crivat," protective forest belts covering 15,000 hectares (2) have been planted in two strips, varying from 11 to 60 meters wide, one on each side of the canal. In the past 3½ years, hundreds of thousands of elms, cherry trees, white acacia, and other trees have been planted.(1)

The raising of fish is expected to increase. The most important centers of fish raising in the country are in the Dobruja in Tulcea, Constanta, Isaccea, Macin, Sulina, Sfântul Gheorghe, and Babada. The first Rumanian school for pisciculture has been set up in Constanta. Thousands of hectares of ponds, deltas, and meadows are now being used for the scientific raising of fish.(2)

The building of the canal will greatly aid health and foreign trade. Statistics show that in the past, one of every seven inhabitants of this area was ill with malaria. The canal project provides for the cleaning up of swamps which have led to the breeding of mosquitoes.(2) Within a short time, foreign trade will be expedited by the shortening of the water route; ships carrying grain, cotton, machines, and petroleum will make their way to the sea via the Danube-Black Sea Canal.(1)

The appended map shows the path of the canal, the protective forest belt on each side, the approximate location of the ten road and railroad bridges over the canal, the approximate location of the principal locks, and the new roads along the canal.(1)

SOURCES

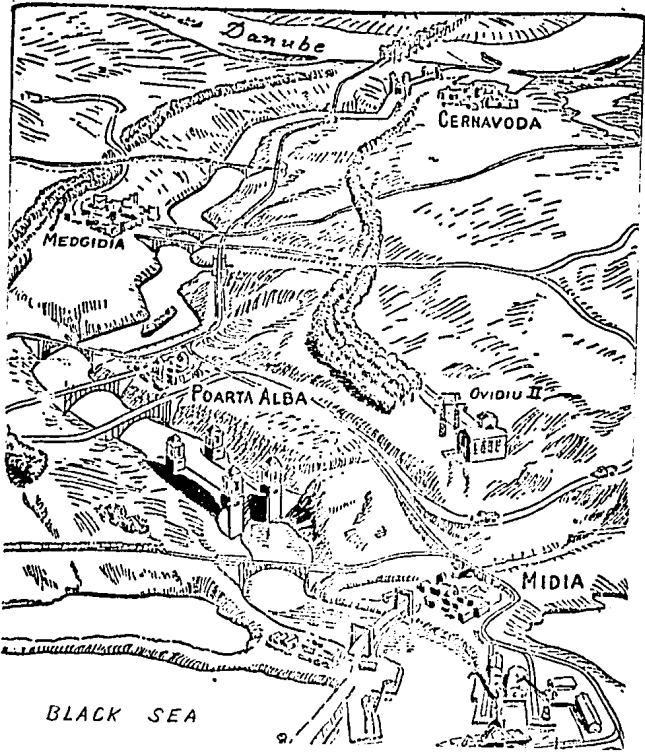
1. Vienna, Oesterreichische Zeitung, 23 May 53
2. Bucharest, Stiinta si Tehnica pentru Tineret, May 1953

- 3 -

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

STAT



Sketch of the Danube-Black Sea Canal

- END -

STAT